



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**  
**Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-0050

**Frequently Asked Questions About HUD and EPA's  
Notice of Funding Availability for the  
Capacity Building for Sustainable Communities Program**

Updated 6/30/2011

**I am a current Sustainable Communities Grantee, PSS Community, or I did not receive a Sustainable Communities grant in FY2010. Can I still apply for this grant opportunity?**

This Program will identify entities to provide capacity building support to FY2010 and FY2011 Sustainable Communities Grantees from HUD and EPA. Entities who wish to receive capacity building services should not apply for this funding opportunity, unless they have the required qualifications and capacity to deliver capacity building services to organizations on a nationwide basis.

**Who is eligible to apply for this program? Are private firms eligible to apply? Can my organization apply as part of a team?**

Under this program, the following types of entities are eligible applicants:

- a. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization;
- b. A local or state public agency;
- c. A for-profit organization (for-profit firms are eligible, however, while they are allowed to cover their direct and indirect costs, they are not allowed to earn a profit from the project, and they are not eligible to receive EPA funding);
- d. A nationally recognized and accredited University or College; or
- e. Any combination of the aforementioned entities as a Capacity Building Team to combine their skills and offer a coordinated program. A Capacity Building Team must designate a lead applicant to act as the fiscal agent for the grant.

As explained above, for-profit firms are eligible applicants, and therefore eligible to be members of a Capacity Building Team, but they are not allowed to earn a profit above their direct and indirect costs, and will not receive funds provided by EPA. For-profit firms have the same applicant requirements as any other applicant.

**What is the CDFA number to locate the program NOFA in Grants.gov**  
14.705.

**Where can we get the list of all the 2010-2011 grant awardees and their proposals? How and when will we know who the grantees are and what their capacity building needs are?**

The NOFA lists seven areas where HUD is seeking capacity building support. HUD will work with the entities selected through this NOFA to target their services. Grant summaries for HUD's grantees are available at [www.hud.gov/sustainability](http://www.hud.gov/sustainability), and EPA's assistance recipients at [www.epa.gov/smartgrowth](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth).

**Assuming that many of the Sustainable Communities Grantees use their funds for consultants, how would a Capacity Building grantee interface with these consultants?**

HUD, EPA, and other Partnership agencies will work with the entities selected through this NOFA to ensure there is a coordinated delivery of Capacity Building services.

**Can you please explain the difference between Category 1: Delivery of Cohort-wide Capacity Building Resources, and Category 2: Targeted Delivery of Issue Area Expertise?**

It is anticipated that Category 1 activities will be delivered primarily, but not exclusively, to most or all of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grantees. Applicants should demonstrate their ability to assemble best practices, support grant recipients around issues of leadership and equity, provide active information exchange, and train targeted recipients in the thematic area.

Category 2 activities will be delivered to a more limited number of Sustainable Communities Grantees. Grants in this category will be awarded to applicants who provide access to national experts on topics explicitly identified by this notice and by the Partnership in order to work with communities on key issues through one-on-one technical assistance and group educational activities. HUD will work with Partnership agencies to coordinate the delivery of these services.

**If we apply for more than one outcome area, do we need to meet ALL of the requirements of each? Do proposals have to address each bullet in each outcome area?**

Applicants to each outcome area will be rated on how well they respond to all parts of that outcome area, and on whether they meet the required qualifications for that outcome area, as explained in Rating Factor 1 (NOFA Section V.A.1), regardless of whether they apply to one or more outcome areas. Applicants applying for consideration in more than one outcome area must clearly express their organizational ability to effectively implement more than one.

**If I apply for more than one outcome area, is HUD able to fund my application for one subject area I applied to, but not for another?**

HUD reserves the right to select all or a portion of the activities proposed by the applicant and/or direct the applicant to work in cooperation with other selected entities. As a result, HUD may adjust proposed budgeted amounts after selection and during final negotiations. HUD has the discretion to refrain from funding a category if proposals do not satisfy the objectives of the capacity building program.

**Would it be appropriate to organize a Capacity Building Team for a specific geography?**

All successful applicants to this program will be expected to provide capacity building services to Sustainable Communities grantees on a nationwide basis. If an applicant is a Capacity Building Team, that team will be expected to provide services on a nationwide basis, but each member of that team does not necessarily have to do so.

**Are team approaches given any additional points in the rating factors?**

There are no additional points given to applicants applying as a Capacity Building Team.

**Can other Federal grant resources used as a match, i.e., TA funds from other grants, CDBG, etc.?**

Other Federal funds cannot be used as a match generally; however, if the authorizing statute for those funds allows them to be used as a match, it is allowed. It is the applicant's responsibility to make sure any federal funds used as match can be used as such. CDBG funds are allowed to be used as match.

**What kinds of activities count towards meeting the required 10% minimum match?**

Applicants must provide a 10 percent match of the requested funding in the form of cash and/or verified in-kind contributions or a combination of these sources. Successful applicants must have the required amount of match resources (10 percent) at the time of signing the cooperative agreement. In-kind contributions may be in the form of staff time, donated materials, or services. In-kind contributions can include physical items such as office supplies, and materials for projects. They can also be in the form of office and meeting space, including allowed use of computers, the phones, fax and copy machines, or the use of a vehicle, and other project related items. In-kind contribution can also be contribution of professional time. When an individual donates his/her time in a professional capacity to supervise members, train or engage in member development, provide technical assistance on a project, evaluate a project, oversee project quality, or provide pro bono work as a member of the nonprofit organization on a permanent or temporary basis, the time involved is an in-kind contribution.

In addition to the in-kind contributions examples provided in the NOFA, applicants may bring other resources such as publications, modeling tools, forecasting tools, and other relevant data sets that are copyrighted by the applicant or are only available exclusively through the applicant, and the applicant would normally charge a fee (i.e. license) separate from ordinary consultation fee for its use. If applicant wishes to count these resources as in-kind contribution they must be made available to HUD grantees in order to be considered as meeting the in-kind match requirement.

**Is there a ceiling to billing rates?**

Yes. Below is the passage from HUD's FY2011 General Section: "m. Salary Limitation for Consultants. Unless otherwise provided in the program NOFA, FY2011 funds may not be used to pay or to provide reimbursement for payment of the salary of a consultant at a rate more than the equivalent of General Schedule 15, Step 10, base rate in accordance with Office of Personnel Management pay scales posted at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/11tables/indexGS.asp>."

**How open are you to innovative proposals?**

HUD and EPA are seeking those entities that are best able to provide the most up-to-date information and capacity building services to the Sustainable Communities Grantees. All applications are scored according to the rating factors explained in Section V of the NOFA.

**When will awards be made?**

The application review process will begin immediately after the applications are due on July 8, 2011, and awards will be announced when that review process is complete.

**Can you explain how HUD and EPA will deploy the TA once it's all arranged and lined up?**

HUD, EPA, and other Partnership agencies will work with the entities selected through this NOFA to ensure that the purposes of the Capacity Building for Sustainable Communities Grant Program are being carried out nationally and that entities are following through on their commitments to sustainable regional development as evidenced by plans developed or expanded under this program. HUD's substantial involvement may include directing selected intermediaries to provide capacity building services to particular Sustainable Communities Grantees for the purposes of improving their performance, collecting and disseminating best practices through the network, monitoring capacity building progress, and review of deliverable materials including requiring adjustments prior to acceptance of the materials or proposed methods to be deployed to meet the objectives of this NOFA.

**We are a for-profit firm. This would exclude us from applying for pots of money that the EPA has provided. It is not clear which categories these are. Can you tell us which categories are funded by EPA? Are there mixes of EPA/HUD? If so, what are the splits on how much is funded by each agency?**

It will be the responsibility of the agencies to make sure that no EPA funds are directed to a for-profit entity. However, if a Capacity Building Team comes together with non-profit and for-profit entities, the risk of funding constrictions would naturally be diminished.

**If we cannot apply as the lead applicant for EPA funded categories, can we be a partner to or sub-consultant to a lead applicant who fits EPA criteria to provide a specific expertise?**

See response above. You can apply as a subconsultant should you choose. However, be advised that provisions that apply to the lead applicant flow down to subs.

**Can you verify the number of current Sustainable Communities grantees fitting under the designation of large metropolitan regions versus medium sized regions versus small town / rural / tribal regions? How does this break down?**

Of the HUD Regional Sustainable Communities Grantees, there are 19 Large regions (more than 500,000 population), 13 Medium (200,000 – 500,000), and 13 Small (less than 200,000). The Challenge grantees have a broad spread of population.

**If we are providing services related to transportation challenges and solutions, why was the DOT not involved in providing funding for this initiative and have they budgeted any actual DOT staff involvement as part of the collaboration on this effort?**

The entire Partnership for Sustainable Communities is committed to this effort and the lack of DOT funding contribution to this NOFA should not distract from the importance of transportation in the slightest.

**My organization is already working with a Sustainable Communities Grantee. If we are selected, we may end up providing services to a grantee we are already working with. Will that interaction be allowed or would we have to let that interaction be handled by another service provider?**

The Partnership will determine the best fit of service delivery of providers to the grantees, but your concern about a restriction of contact with an existing partner is unwarranted.

**If we want to apply for more than one outcome area, can we submit a separate application for each topic area, or should we combine them into one application? Our team structure for each outcome area would be different.**

A lead applicant may submit only one application.

**How can I ask additional questions about this NOFA?**

Please send additional questions to [sustainablecommunities@hud.gov](mailto:sustainablecommunities@hud.gov). Due to the HUD Reform Act, HUD personnel cannot advise a single entity and may only point to portions of the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and/or publically available sources where information can be found. Program staff may provide assistance to applicants about the process of applying for a grant, e.g., location of forms, submission of application, etc. Under Section 103 of the HUD Reform Act, HUD employees are prohibited from disclosing certain information during the selection process to persons within or outside of the Department who are not authorized to receive that information. Its purpose is to preclude giving an unfair advantage to applicants who would receive information not available to other applicants or to the public.